



Timely Information for Personal Success

The Cloak of Credibility

In a Polarizing World, Trust is More Important than Ever

By Jim Bohn, PhD

Between big tech, big media, and polarizing politics, trust in many circles is at an all-time low. And yet, nothing has greater power to influence employees, team members or peers than the bond of trust. Here's why: Every action that leaders take either *builds* or *diminishes* what I like to call a "cloak of credibility", which is the confidence others will place because of a reputation for reliability and trustworthiness. This is true of politicians, giant businesses, broadcast, print, and social media, and everything in between. The cloak of credibility has incredible implications:

- Employees who trust their leadership are willing to go the extra mile to ensure their managers and leaders achieve what they want to achieve.
- Employees who trust their leadership are willing to do more with less questioning of motives.
- Employees who trust their leadership *know* that their leaders will reward them for good work.
- Employees who trust their leadership are willing to expose vulnerabilities and ask for help.
- Employees who trust their leadership are willing to raise issues that pose risk to a project or initiative.
- Employees who trust their leadership are willing to give feedback without fear of reprisal.

When a business leader delivers what he/she says they will, trust is enhanced.

How do leaders break trust?

Here are a few examples:

(1) A leader promises to get an employee a pay increase but doesn't take all the steps and drops the ball - *trust is eroded*.

(2) A leader does not defend an employee's ideas during a stressful meeting with executives - *trust is eroded*.

(3) A leader makes a promise he/she cannot possibly keep (e.g. "You'll be promoted") - *trust is eroded*.

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Meal Planning for the New Year!

Want a more organized kitchen and better understanding of how to shop and cook in 2021? The following are some tips:

1. Take an inventory of what you have in your cabinets, refrigerator, and freezer. Be sure to check out the containers and bags that may be hiding in the back. Sometimes perfectly good food goes to waste because it is forgotten.

2. Purge. Once you see everything you have on hand, it becomes easier to envision here you need to not only get rid of expired items, but also to substitute healthier foods, like more fruits and veg-

gies, for unhealthy ones like packaged cakes or cookies. Consider donating unwanted items to a local food pantry!

3. Remember the three rules: Almost anything can be made into...*soup*... *a wrap sandwich*...or *tossed with pasta*. Take advantage of recipe sites where you can enter an ingredient to find relevant recipes. www.allrecipes.com and www.epicurious.com are two of them.

Make notes on what you've learned and save any new recipes.

Sources: *Kelsey Lorenz, registered dietitian, Joy Manning at Silver Sneakers.*

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Phone: 715-445-4386
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Editor/Publisher: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Lying on a Resume: Now What?

Q: *I believe that one of my employees lied on her resume. She is a big talker who boasts about being a presenter at a conference in our field, but her resume doesn't say anything about this. Should I tell HR? She is otherwise a good employee. What suggestions do you have?*

A: While lying on a resume is a serious concern and can certainly be grounds for dismissal, I doubt you have very credible evidence. First off, is it possible she just inadvertently left it off her resume, or maybe didn't feel it was that crucial to include?

Second, is there someone you could follow up with about this short of HR? For instance, have you attended the same conference your colleague supposedly presented at? Could a planner of this event confirm your concerns?

But you also state that this is a capable employee. You have to weigh your desire to do the right thing versus the possibility that you're wrong and could irreparably damage her reputation. As you said, she's a big talker, but it is not unlawful to be obnoxious. If you do decide to share your concerns, be very careful.

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(4) When traveling, a leader does not take the time to introduce an employee to key individuals, leaving the employee feeling like a fifth wheel - *trust is eroded.*

(5) A leader takes credit for an employee's efforts - *trust is eroded.*

This list could go on. *Building trust is, simply, keeping one's word as a leader.*

If a leader promises something, he/she delivers. No matter how hard it may be, no matter what it may cost us. Keeping one's word is the foundation of trust.

If someone tells people they're going to do something, they *follow through.*

If they tell people they're going to support them, no matter what, they don't throw them under the bus.

Perhaps more than any other behavior, trust is the human element that creates useful and effective change.

Summary

Without trust, everything else falls apart. In fact, I would argue that the words "I trust you" are even more powerful than the words "I love you". It is invisible, but very real. Unseen, but formidable. Intangible, but a force for every effective human relationship. In a world in which trust has been in such short supply, a business leader who can be trusted will truly stand out. ■